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AUTOMOBILE ROUTES FROM CALIFORNIA TO THE
PATH OF TOTALITY FOR THE SOLAR ECLIPSE OF
JUNE 8, 1918'

BY SIDNEY D. TOWNLEY

The point where the path of totality for the eclipse of June 8th crosses the boundary between Oregon and Idaho is the nearest, in an air line to San Francisco. Various places along the path of totality from the coast of the State of Washington to Green River, Wyoming, may be reached by automobile by trips varying in length from 800 to 1200 miles from San Francisco.

The places in eastern Idaho and Wyoming can be reached by the transcontinental highway over the Sierras thru Nevada and Utah. Unless the season is an early one, however, the pass over the Sierras will not be free from snow by the first of June, which would make this route impossible. In 1917 the Placerville route was opened to general traffic on June 15th, and the Auburn route not until still later. I shall, therefore, in this article, confine myself chiefly to the routes leading to Oregon and Washington points.

The chief points accessible by automobile, within the limits set, are Chehalis and Goldendale, Washington; Arlington, Heppner and Baker, Oregon; Weiser, Hailey and Pocatello, Idaho; and Green River, Wyoming.

Members of the California State Automobile Association can obtain maps and information concerning routes and condition of roads from the headquarters of this association, in San Francisco. It is impossible to state now what conditions the roads will be in by June 1st, and members of the association should by all means obtain, shortly before starting, all the information they can concerning the condition of roads and possible detours which may be necessary on account of road construction.

I would also strongly urge autoists to provide themselves with a copy of the "Automobile Blue Book" covering the section traveled. This book has been issued a number of years now and improved each year. The various volumes of the series cover the whole of the United States and southern Canada. The books contain good maps, and routes between various cities are accurately described, giving every turn in the road with the mileage from the starting point and also the mileage between places. Condition of the roads

and grades are also given, together with the names of reliable hotels and garages at all principal points. The Blue Book will be found especially valuable in Oregon, because road signs are not nearly so numerous there as in California. In a trip last summer of nearly 2,500 miles thru northern California and Oregon, we lost our route but twice, once owing to our own carelessness in not following the directions of the book, and once due to an error in the book where the directions said turn left when it should have been turn right. If one makes a mistake, he is sure to find it out before he has gone very far. The 1918 issues of the Blue Book will be ready about May 1st, and may be obtained thru garages or from The Automobile Blue Book Publishing Co., Pacific Building, San Francisco.

Both California and Oregon are building systems of state roads. Work on the California state roads has been in progress several years while the state roads of Oregon were just begun last year, when a bond issue of \$6,000,000 was voted for this purpose. Within a couple of years, it will be possible to travel from Mexico to Canada at any time of the year. Improvements are being made each year, but there are still some stretches which are undeniably bad, and if there should be heavy rains in the latter part of May, some of these sections will make very tough traveling at eclipse time.

In the following descriptions of routes, no attempt is made to enter into details—these may be obtained from maps and the Blue Book. The distances given must be understood to be only approximately correct. For instance, the distance from San Francisco to Portland will depend upon the route taken to reach the Sacramento Valley, the route by way of Livermore and Stockton being some 25 miles longer than that via Martinez and Benicia. A little description of each destination and a statement concerning the probability of clear weather at each is given under route 1 to each place.

San Francisco to Portland. Distance 765 miles. Altho Portland lies outside the path of totality, most parties traveling from California to Oregon to view the eclipse will want to go to Portland either on the going or the return trip, and I will therefore describe briefly the route from San Francisco to Portland before taking up the routes to the individual places.

It seems hardly necessary to describe the various routes from San Francisco to the Sacramento Valley, but when that part has

been reached, one has a choice of proceeding to Red Bluff on either the east or the west side of the river. Last year the road on the west side was the better, but which will be better during the coming summer cannot be foretold at the present time. From Red Bluff to Redding, there is a good road, but between Redding and Duns-muir there is some of the worst road that I ever traveled over. Work of rebuilding this section began last summer, but is not yet completed. The state highway officials, however, hope to have it in shape for the summer travel. At present the section of this road between Sims and Castella is closed and it is necessary to make a big detour, leaving the Pacific Highway at Redding, and going northeast thru Ingot, Montgomery, Burney, Cayton, Bartle and McCloud, rejoining the highway at Sisson. From Sisson north, the roads are, for the most part, in good shape, and the route leads thru Yreka, Hornbrook, Ashland, Medford, Grants Pass, Glen-dale, Roseburg, Drain, Cottage Grove, Eugene, Corvallis, Albany, Salem, Oregon City, Portland. The road over the Siskiyou Moun-tains between Hornbrook and Ashland has been reconstructed with easy grades and good road bed. The worst parts of the Pacific Highway in Oregon are to be found in the neighborhood of Roseburg and Cottage Grove. There are two or three very steep grades south of Roseburg and there are some stretches of very rough road, altho these are being constantly improved.

An alternative route for part of the trip from San Francisco to Portland may be chosen by going to Santa Rosa, then up the valley of the Russian River to Ukiah, thence to Mendocino, Fort Bragg, Eureka, Crescent City and thence inland, again joining the Pacific Highway at Grants Pass, Oregon. There is some beautiful scenery along this route, but the roads from Ukiah north, are ordinary mountain roads, which means of course that steep grades, sharp turns, narrow road bed, and rough road bed will be encountered at various places, altho fortunately these four bad elements are not usually encountered at one and the same place. I have not traveled this route beyond Mendocino, so cannot speak from per-sonal experience concerning all of it. The distance from San Fran-cisco to Portland by this route is about 780 miles. Eureka may also be reached by a cross road from either Red Bluff or Redding.

San Francisco to Chehalis. Distance 865 miles. Follow the Pacific Highway from San Francisco to Portland, then cross the Columbia River by the interstate bridge to Vancouver, Washing-

ton, and thence continuing on the Pacific Highway thru Woodland, Kalama to Chehalis. A small place called Toledo, about 20 miles south of Chehalis is nearer the central line of totality. On account of the large rainfall on the west side of the Cascades, Chehalis will probably not be as favorable a location for observing the eclipse as other stations on the east side of the Cascades. Chehalis has a population of about 5,000.

San Francisco to Goldendale. Route 1; 890 miles. Follow the Pacific Highway to Portland. Cross the Columbia on the interstate bridge to Vancouver, then follow the north bank highway thru Washougal, Stevenson, White Salmon, Lyle to Goldendale. Goldendale is a town of 1200 inhabitants situated on the eastern side of the Cascades in Klickitat Valley at an elevation of 1,600 feet. The surrounding country is comparatively flat and the meteorological observations indicate that the chances for clear skies on eclipse day are excellent—in fact the region near the point where the central line of totality crosses the boundary line between Washington and Oregon is, I believe, one of the most favorable regions on the whole line of totality. The soil of the surrounding country is heavy so there would be no danger of sand storms. [A statement in my article in the February number of these PUBLICATIONS saying that Goldendale might be subject to sand storms is apparently incorrect.]

San Francisco to Goldendale. Route 2; 890 miles. Pacific Highway to Portland, thence along the Columbia Highway to the eastern limits of Multnomah County, and thence over a rough road to Hood River. Take ferry across the Columbia from Hood River to White Salmon and thence as in route 1 to Goldendale. Or one may continue from Hood River to The Dalles and cross the Columbia at that point with about the same mileage. There are, however, some very steep grades between Hood River and The Dalles. The Columbia Highway, which runs for about 50 miles east of Portland is, I believe, one of the most beautiful highways in the world. The gap between its eastern terminus and Hood River is now being built. This part of the road was closed to thru traffic the day after we passed over it last September, and just what condition it will be in by June 1st, cannot be foretold at the present time.

San Francisco to Goldendale. Route 3; 820 miles. Follow the Pacific Highway from San Francisco to Yreka, thence northeast

thru Ager, Klamath Hot Springs, and Keno to Klamath Falls; thence north thru Fort Klamath, Crescent, Bend, Madras, Tyth Valley to The Dalles; thence by ferry across the Columbia and on to Goldendale. Central Oregon is a high plateau region of volcanic origin, and the roads, altho just ordinary dirt or gravel roads of the country variety, are, for the most part, kept in good shape and a trip by this route will present no special difficulties if the bad stretch south of Dunsmuir can be successfully negotiated. There are some long stretches between towns, so it is a good plan to keep the gasoline tank well filled. The motorist should be sure to fill up at both Yreka and Klamath Falls. After passing Fort Klamath, there is a stretch of 65 miles where no gasoline can be obtained. If there are rains late in May, I would advise motorists to take this route east of the Cascades rather than the Pacific Highway.

San Francisco to Arlington. Route 1; 920 miles. Take the Pacific Highway to Portland, then east on the Columbia Highway and on thru Hood River, The Dalles to Wasco, thence continuing east to McDonald's ferry across the John Day River; and thence on to Rock Creek and then north to Arlington. Rock Creek is very close to the central line of totality, but it is a very small place without hotel accommodations. Arlington is about ten miles north of the central line of totality, but according to the meteorological records, there is perhaps a better chance of clear weather at Arlington than at any other place in the United States along the path of totality. Arlington is a town of about 400 inhabitants situated on the main line of the O. W. R. & N. at an altitude of 220 feet. Blalock, Quinton and Day, small stations on the O. W. R. N. Co. line west of Arlington are nearer the central line, but they are not easily reached by auto, as there is no wagon road along this part of the Columbia, and they cannot be reached directly from either Arlington or The Dalles. From Wasco to Arlington, the motorist is liable to find some bad stretches of road. This is a region of sand and more sand. During the dry season, these roads become so badly cut up in places as to become almost impassable. In early June, however, they should be much better than when we passed *thru*, not *over*, them in July and September of last year.

A good plan might be for the motorist to stop at The Dalles, where there are good hotel accommodations, and then on the day of the eclipse, to go by train to Arlington or some of the small stations between The Dalles and Arlington.

San Francisco to Arlington. Route 2; 820 miles. Follow the same road as route 3 to Goldendale as far as Madras. Then north thru Shaniko to Wasco and thence to Arlington by the route just described. This route is to be preferred to route 1 if the season is wet.

San Francisco to Heppner. Route 1; 960 miles. Follow the same road as route 1 to Arlington as far as Rock Creek, then keep straight ahead instead of turning north. From Olex, ten miles beyond Rock Creek, there are two routes to Heppner, one thru Echo and Lexington, the other along the ridge road thru Eight Mile Center. This is a semi-arid country of immense rolling hills. Neither of these roads is a boulevard, but last summer the ridge road was the better of the two. There are long stretches here without gasoline or water. Heppner is a town of about 1,000 inhabitants situated on a branch of the O. W. R. N., 45 miles from the main line. The altitude is 1,950 feet. The chances for clear weather at Heppner are very good.

San Francisco to Heppner. Route 2; 860 miles. Same as route 2 to Arlington as far as Rock Creek, then same as route 1 to Heppner just described.

San Francisco to Baker. Route 1; 1,130 miles. Pacific Highway to Portland, Columbia Highway, Hood River, The Dalles, Wasco, Rock Creek, Heppner, Pendleton, La Grande, Union, Baker. This route has been described as far as Heppner. From there to Pendleton the roads are fair. Between Pendleton and La Grande, the Blue Mountains are crossed. There are some steep grades and other characteristics of ordinary mountain roads. These roads become badly cut up during the summer. From La Grande to Baker, the roads are good.

Baker is a city of about 8,000 inhabitants, situated on the main line of the O. W. R. & N. Co. road, at an altitude of 3,471 feet. The city is in a valley on the east side of the main range of the Blue Mountains and the immediate surroundings are flat. Meteorological observations indicate that there is a good chance of clear weather at Baker at eclipse time, but the chances are, I think, not quite so good as at Goldendale, Arlington and Heppner.

San Francisco to Baker. Route 2; 1,030 miles. Pacific Highway to Yreka, thence by Klamath Falls, Bend, Wasco, Heppner, Pendleton and La Grande to Baker. This route has all been described under previous routings and nothing further need be said.

San Francisco to Baker. Route 3; 950 miles. Same as route 2 to Klamath Falls, thence thru Bly to Lakeview. From Lakeview to Burns, and thence thru Beulah, Vale, Ontario, Fruitland (Idaho), Payette, Weiser, Huntington to Baker. These are country roads and some of them rough. On either side of Burns, there are long stretches where both gasoline and water are scarce.

San Francisco to Baker. Route 4; 870 miles. Pacific Highway to Redding, thence direct to Lakeview, via Alturas. From Lakeview to Baker same as route 3. I have not traveled this route beyond Redding, but it is over a rolling mountain country and said to be very rough in spots. This road goes thru the region of Mt. Lassen. It is one of the scenic routes of California, and there is said to be good fishing.

San Francisco to Weiser, Idaho. Weiser is on the main line of the Union Pacific system from Ogden to Portland, and may be reached by any of the four routes just described to Baker. For the first two routes add 72 miles, and for routes 3 and 4, subtract 72 miles. By route 4, Weiser is 800 miles from San Francisco, and is closer to San Francisco than any other point on the path of totality. Weiser is about 15 miles south of the central line of totality, but the central line may be easily reached. The chances for clear weather at this point are, I believe, very good.

San Francisco to Hailey, Idaho. Hailey is exactly on the central line of the eclipse and may be reached by any of the routes to Baker, or Weiser and proceeding via Boise. Hailey is 170 miles southeast of Weiser and is in one of the scenic regions of Idaho. The population is about 1,500 and the altitude 5,347 feet. The chances for clear weather are good.

Side Trips. There are a great many points of interest in northern California, Oregon, Washington and Idaho which motoring parties might visit if they have the time and inclination. Among these may be mentioned Mt. Lassen, Mt. Shasta, Mt. Hood, Mt. Ranier, Crater Lake, and many other lakes of interest. Most of these places can now be reached by automobile, but the first half of June is, of course, rather early for trips to the high mountains. There is a beautiful scenic route to Mt. Ranier National Park easily reached from Tacoma or Chehalis. Crater Lake is one of the wonders of the world, and may be reached by automobile either from Medford or Klamath Falls. The Crater is only 15 miles off the main road from Klamath Falls to Bend. The govern-

ment is building a road around the rim of the lake, which is nearly circular in form, about six miles in diameter, and 1,000 feet below the rim. The colors of the water as seen from the rim are truly marvelous. I visited the lake on July 14th last year. The first auto reached the rim only six days before this date, and the road from Medford and the road around the rim were still blocked with snow on the day we were there.

Camping Places. Many cities are now providing camping places for auto parties and many people are taking advantage of them. The finest of these that we found was at Ashland, Oregon. A part of the city park has been set aside for autoists and there are electric lights, gas and other conveniences. We found a two-burner folding gasoline stove to be a great convenience on a camping trip.

In conclusion I wish to warn motorists, not familiar with travel in mountainous or sandy regions, not to underestimate the time necessary to reach the path of totality. It is possible to make 200 miles a day or better on the paved roads of the Sacramento Valley, but this is not possible in the mountains. In the worst sections it is difficult to average more than ten miles an hour. Our trip to Baker last summer by route 2 took twelve days, including a half day stop at Shasta Springs, a day's fishing on Shovel Creek, near Klamath Hot Springs, and a side trip to Crater Lake. If we call this nine days running the average was about 115 miles per day. We had only one puncture on the trip and two or three other small troubles, so that our slow time was not caused by auto trouble. Faster time of course can be made, but both pleasure and safety may be sacrificed. We saw many cars in serious trouble, nearly always due to fast or careless driving.

I hope to have printed a map of the region under consideration showing both the principal roads and cities and the path of totality. I shall be glad to send copies of the map to parties contemplating this trip and also to give any information that I can concerning the various routes.

Stanford University, Cal.,

March, 1918.